

More than once, I've written that there's no animal protection group in the world like The HSUS. We have program experts devoted to protecting all kinds of animals at risk—farm animals, companion animals, horses, wildlife, and animals in laboratories. They team up with our undercover investigators, writers, lawyers, lobbyists, social marketers, veterinarians and doctors, and so many other professionals who are at the top of their field. We've got other staff situated in just about every state to extend the reach of our programs—building coalitions, meeting with lawmakers, and educating the public. Combine all that with our hunger for reform and our belief that change for the better is indeed possible. And when you bundle it all up, there's an unparalleled breadth and depth to our programs and an unmatched record of tangible accomplishments—as I said, unlike any group on the globe.

On one level, The HSUS's task of fighting cruelty may seem straightforward and simple. No right-thinking person should quarrel with such a laudable objective. Animals think and feel, and it's wrong to take advantage of them and cause them pain and suffering.

For example, we've achieved a societal consensus that dogfighting is cruel and immoral. That's the case partly because the animals suffer so much and the activity has no social value. It's torture and killing just for human entertainment.

But many people are more conflicted about other, more routine uses of animals. Harm befalls animals confined on factory farms, targeted in "wildlife management" programs, and treated as living test tubes in laboratories. But it's argued that these uses are conducted for justifiable reasons—such as providing affordable food, reducing conflicts with wildlife, or protecting human health. There's no malice intended—just workmanlike killing of animals, and each industry purports to have its own set of rules and standards. They've all enlisted a cadre of scientists and government officials who assure the public that their treatment of animals is perfectly acceptable.

And herein is the challenge of applying anticruelty principles in a world where so many uses of animals are considered routine and normal. Our political adversaries are skilled at creating confusion and are expert at rationalizing their conduct.

But no matter what they say, we know it's wrong to confine breeding sows in crates so small that the animals are immobilized. We know it's wrong to slaughter wolves because they have the potential to kill livestock. And we know it's wrong to kill animals for fur just because it's been done for so long.

In our society today, we have options and alternatives. We have the ingenuity and creativity of the human mind to provide alternative means of conducting agriculture, reducing wildlife conflicts, or delivering safe products to market.

Past necessities are now simple matters of choice. And when animals' lives are at stake, we have a moral duty to make life-affirming choices.

We can conduct our business, maintain a high quality of life, and enjoy a robust economy without leaving a trail of animal victims in our wake. We have the ability to make progress but also be good to animals, too. I call it the "humane economy."

Every day, The HSUS challenges the false choices presented by people within industries that cause harm to animals. Our task has never been easy, but our path to progress is more clear than ever. But we cannot press the case, and drive reform, without you. Your support has helped build the world's most effective animal protection organization. And today we are on the cusp of great change. It's no time to relent, and that's why we need your support more than ever.



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